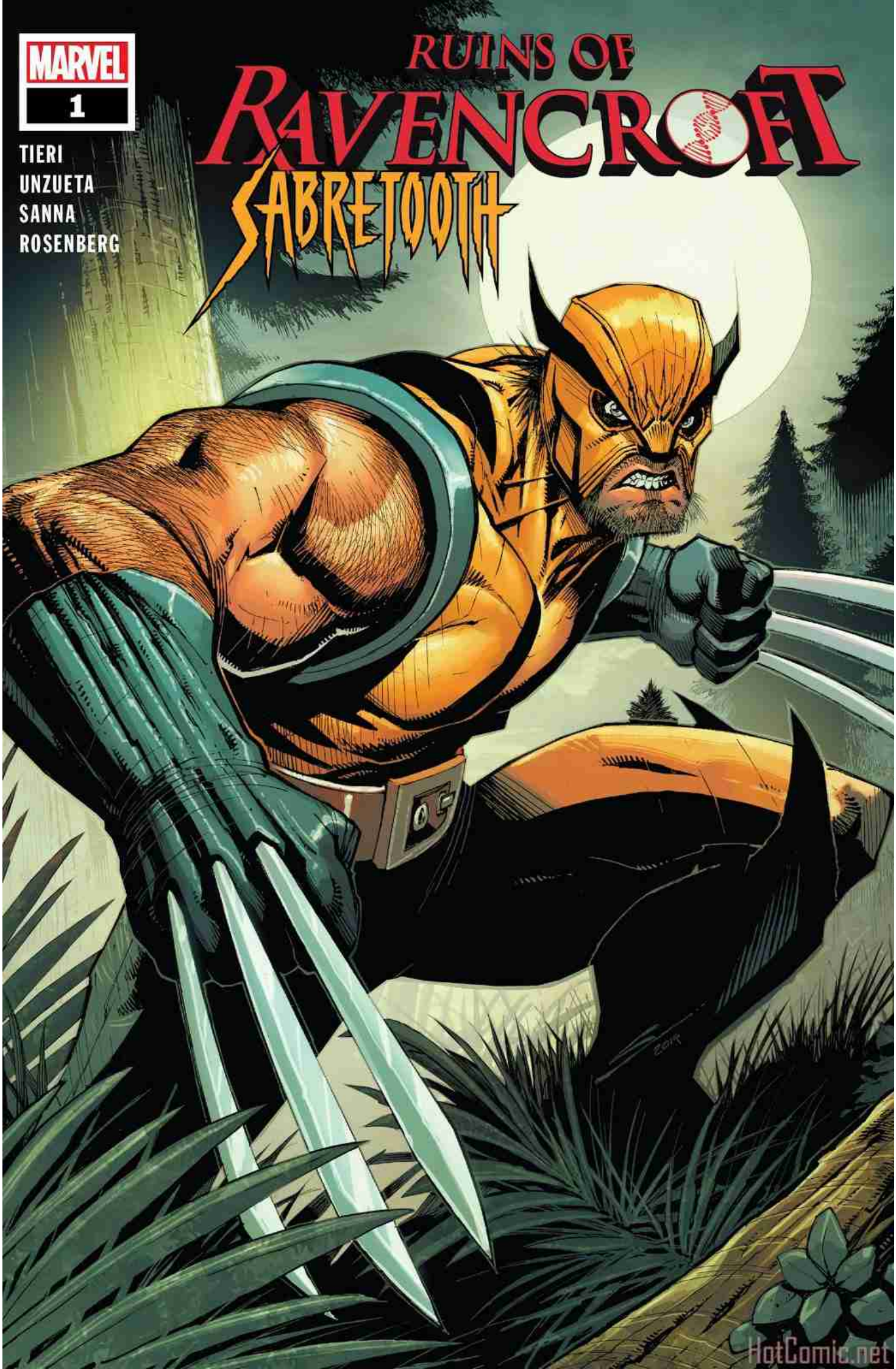

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RUINS OF RAVENCROFT

SABRETOOTH

AFTER THE EVENTS OF **ABSOLUTE CARNAGE**, THE RAVENCROFT INSTITUTE FOR THE CRIMINALLY INSANE WAS DECIMATED. BUT RECONSTRUCTION EFFORTS ARE ALREADY UNDERWAY, THANKS TO A DONATION FROM **REED RICHARDS** AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR.

RICHARDS IS NOT ALONE IN HIS INTEREST IN THE FACILITY, AS **MAYOR WILSON FISK** ALSO HAS TAKEN AN ACTIVE ROLE IN RESTORING RAVENCROFT TO ITS FORMER GLORY, THOUGH THE CAUSE OF HIS INTEREST REMAINS A MYSTERY.

REGARDLESS OF HIS INTENT, FISK HAS BROKERED A DEAL WITH **JOHN JAMESON**, DECORATED SERVICEMAN, SON OF J. JONAH JAMESON AND SECRETLY THE MONSTROUS **MAN-WOLF**: IN EXCHANGE FOR SUPPLYING FISK WITH INFORMATION ABOUT RAVENCROFT'S DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS, JAMESON WON'T BE ARRESTED OR TRIED FOR CRIMES COMMITTED AS HIS LYCANTHROPIC ALTER-EGO.

BUT JOHN AND FISK ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES WITH SECRETS. THERE'S MORE TO RAVENCROFT ITSELF THAN ANYONE IN THE MARVEL UNIVERSE KNEW, INCLUDING A LONG-ABANDONED SUBTERRANEAN RESEARCH WING OF THE HOSPITAL, REPLETE WITH HORRORS UNSEEN FOR DECADES...

FRANK TIERI ... WRITER

ANGEL UNZUETA ... ARTIST (MODERN DAY)

GUILLERMO SANNA ... ARTIST (FLASHBACK)

RACHELLE ROSENBERG ... COLORIST

VC's TRAVIS LANHAM ... LETTERER

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Underneath the remains of the Ravencroft Institute.
FRANKENSTEIN. HMN.
FRANKENSTEIN
Mary Shelley
HOW APPROPRIATE.
I'M HALF EXPECTING SOME MAD SCIENTIST TO POP UP ANY MINUTE...
...YELLING, "IT'S ALIVE! IT'S ALIVE!"

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GIVE IT A MINUTE, MISTY.
THESE SPECIMENS HERE... SO VARIED, SO UNUSUAL. THEY DATE BACK TO AT LEAST THE 1900s, POSSIBLY EARLIER... WITH MANY OF THEM BEING SO WELL PRESERVED THEY COULD HAVE BEEN COLLECTED YESTERDAY.
I COULD SPEND A LIFETIME IN HERE STUDYING IT ALL.
ZOMBIE
KREE
ASGARDIAN
THE QUESTION IS...WHOSE SPECIMENS? WHOSE LAB IS THIS?
THIS GUY, MAYBE?
HMM... NOW WHY DOES HE SEEM FAMILIAR TO ME?
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THANKFULLY, NONE OF THIS SEEMS FAMILIAR TO ME.
WHICH IS WHY IT'S PERHAPS BEST WE LEAVE THIS PLACE. LEAVE WELL ENOUGH ALONE.
OH REALLY, FISK? WHY DO I HAVE THE FEELING WHILE THIS AREA HERE MAY NOT BE FAMILIAR TO JOHN...
...IT IS TO YOU? THAT YOU'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE.
YOU HAVE QUITE THE VIVID IMAGINATION, MISS KNIGHT.
BUT IT DOESN'T TAKE ONE TO IMAGINE WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE HOLED UP IN THESE CELLS.
ALONE, MISTREATED, EXPERIMENTED ON...
...LEFT FOR DEAD.
THAT DOOR AT THE END...IT'S DIFFERENT FROM THE REST.
WHAT DOES THAT SAY?
UNWANTED
HMMM.

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CLEARLY A WARNING.
AND CLEARLY ONE WE SHOULD HEED.
WELL, I DON'T THINK WE HAVE MUCH OF A CHOICE CONSIDERING HOW TIGHTLY SEALED THAT DOOR LOOKS.
NONSENSE. WITH ENOUGH TORQUE...
...ELASTIC ARMS MAKE FOR A WONDERFUL DOOR OPENER.
CRK CRK CRK CRK CRK
EMPTY?
PERHAPS NOT AS MUCH HERE AS YOU'VE BEEN LED TO BELIEVE.
TIKK TIKK TIKK TIKK

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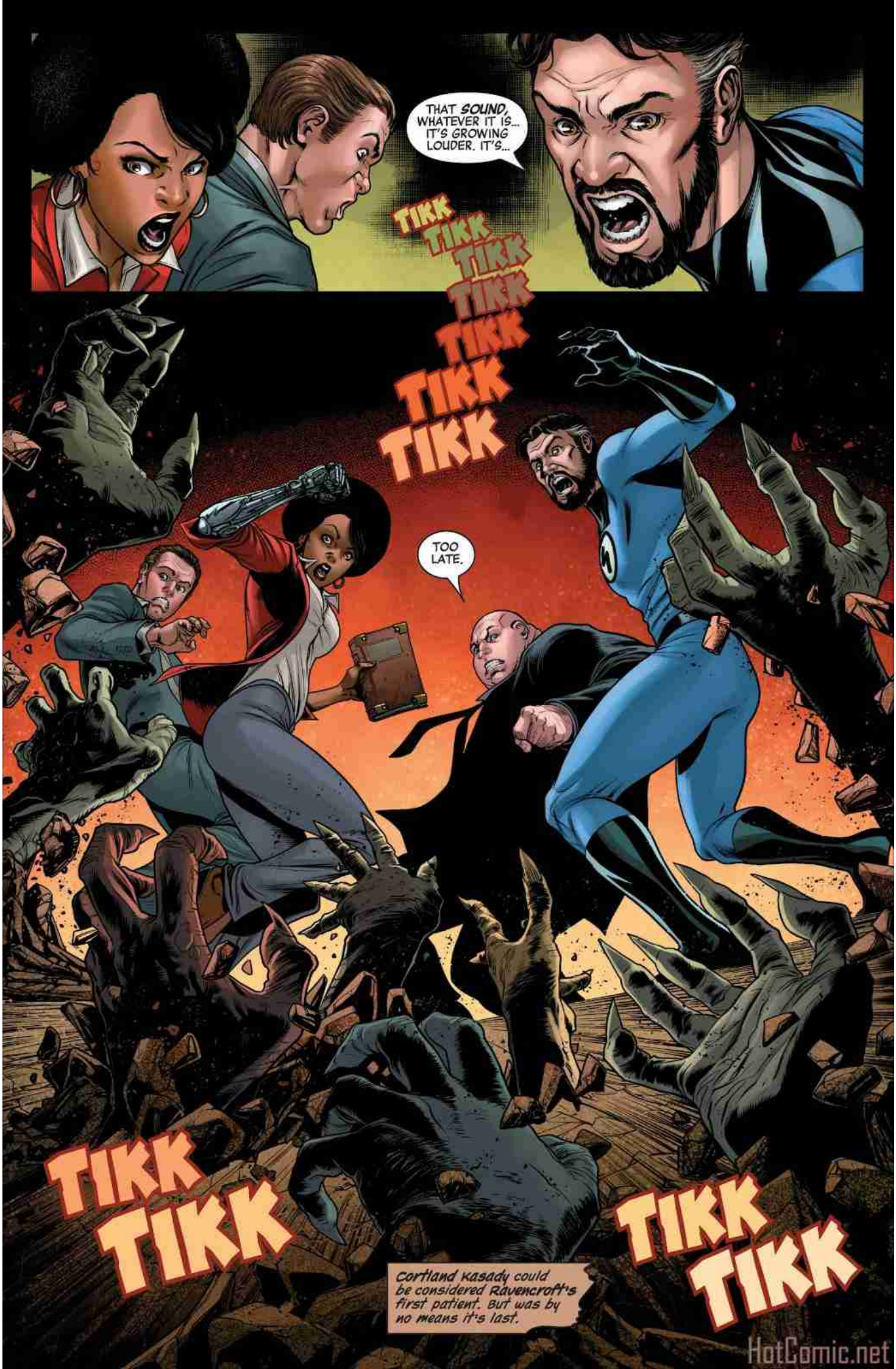
THAT SOUND, WHATEVER IT IS... IT'S GROWING LOUDER. IT'S...
TIKK TIKK TIKK TIKK TIKK TIKK TIKK
TOO LATE.
TIKK TIKK
TIKK TIKK
Cortland Kasady could be considered Ravencroft's first patient. But was by no means it's last.
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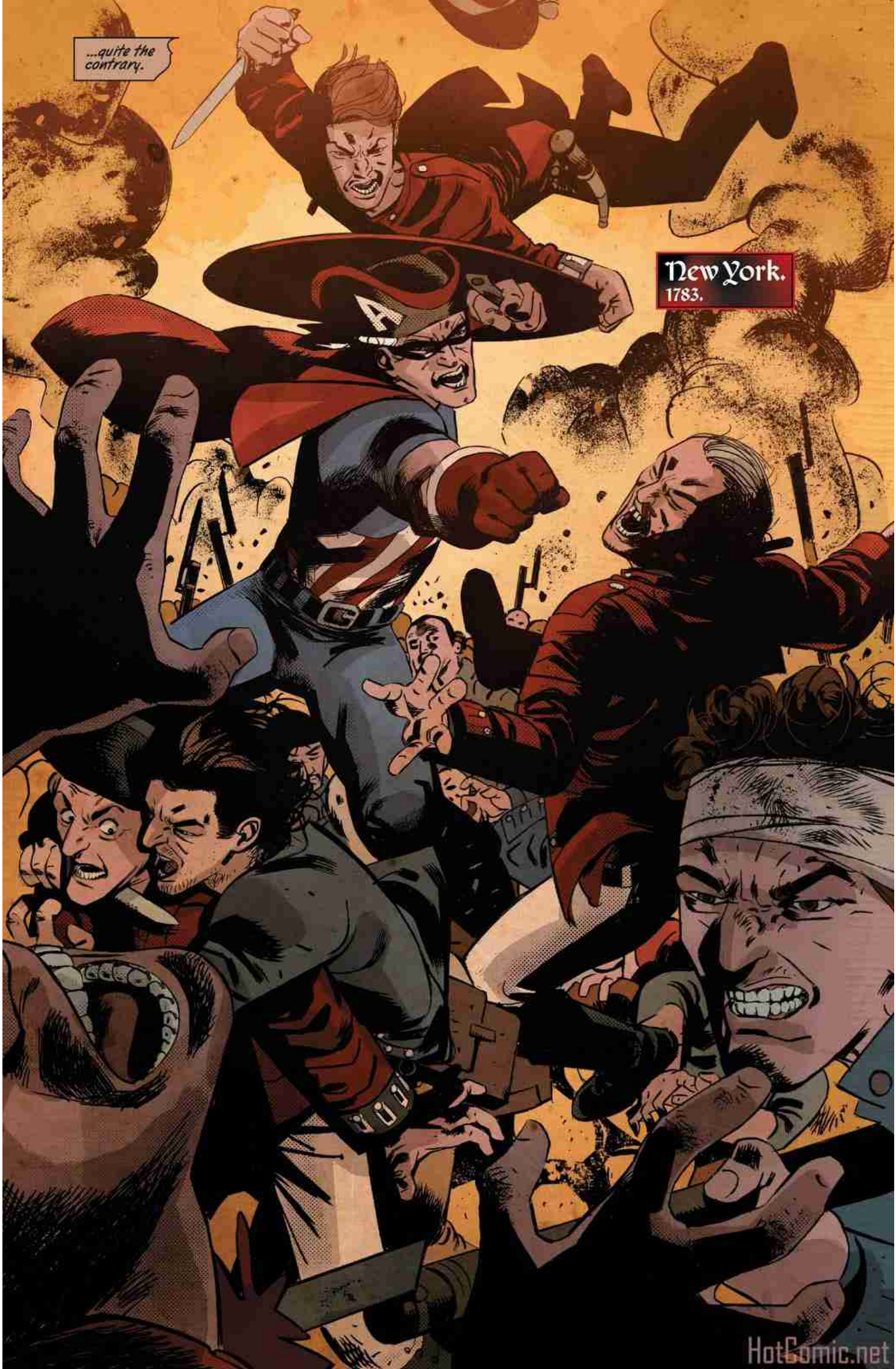
For time, as it always does, moved on.
And so too did the cannibalistic others--those worshippers of the "spiral"--who had plagued the land where the Ravencroft Institute would one day come to be.
Whatever happened to them, history does not tell us...
...but it's not as if their departure stabilized the region. Actually...



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For while the land's native inhabitants may have disappeared, the curse they seem to have saddled the land with remained.

It saw one of the last battles of the American Revolution...

...and some of the nation's earliest heroes.

1804.
The tales of the fantastic continued from there. Each growing more colorful and remarkable as the years passed.
From the rise of the spirit cult of Shuma-Gorath...
1820.
...to the rise of a spirit of vengeance.
1862.
From attacks from within...
1891.
...to attacks from without.

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It's why the region was never developed, no matter what sprung up around it...
NEW YORK
WESTCHESTER

Until I, Jonas Ravencroft, stepped in, that is.
Property ownersh
Westchester

In 1899, I purchased the land for a song with one goal in mind...
Property ownersh
Westchester

To finally address the lack of mental health care in the area.
Care that wasn't available in the time of my ancestor Molly Ravencroft...

And care that nearly never came to be.
There were some, shall we say... difficulties in realizing my vision...
Protestors who didn't want a facility of this sort so close to them...
The construction "accidentally" catching on fire...
And of course, the one day when a worker claimed Mephisto told him to cave in the head of our foreman with a hammer.
But in the end, it was all worth it...
...and the Ravencroft Institute for the Criminally Insane was officially born.

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Though of course, it was not as if growing pains did not follow. Especially in those initial years...
1909.
@#$%!
ONCE AGAIN I DEMAND YOUR ATTENTION! I AM SIR PERCY OF SCANDIA! I WAS SENT TO THIS TIME PERIOD BY THE SHE-WITCH MORGAN LE FAY TO WHAT DIABOLICAL PURPOSE I KNOW NOT!
BUT KNOW THIS... IF YE DO NOT RELEASE ME RIGHT AT THIS MOMENT, I SWEAR BY ARTHUR PENDRAGON HIMSELF I SHALL HUNT EVERY LAST ONE OF YE SPINELESS CRETINS DOWN AND MURDER YE LIKE THE DOGS THAT YOU ARE!
EASY, MY GOOD MAN...YOU'LL GET THE HELP YOU NEED HERE.
HELP? IT IS YOU WHO WILL NEED HELP AFTER I GET A HOLD OF MY BLADE AGAIN!
I SHALL FLAY YE ALIVE, YE SON OF A @#$%!
RELEASE ME!
PERHAPS WE SHOULD DO AS HE SAYS...

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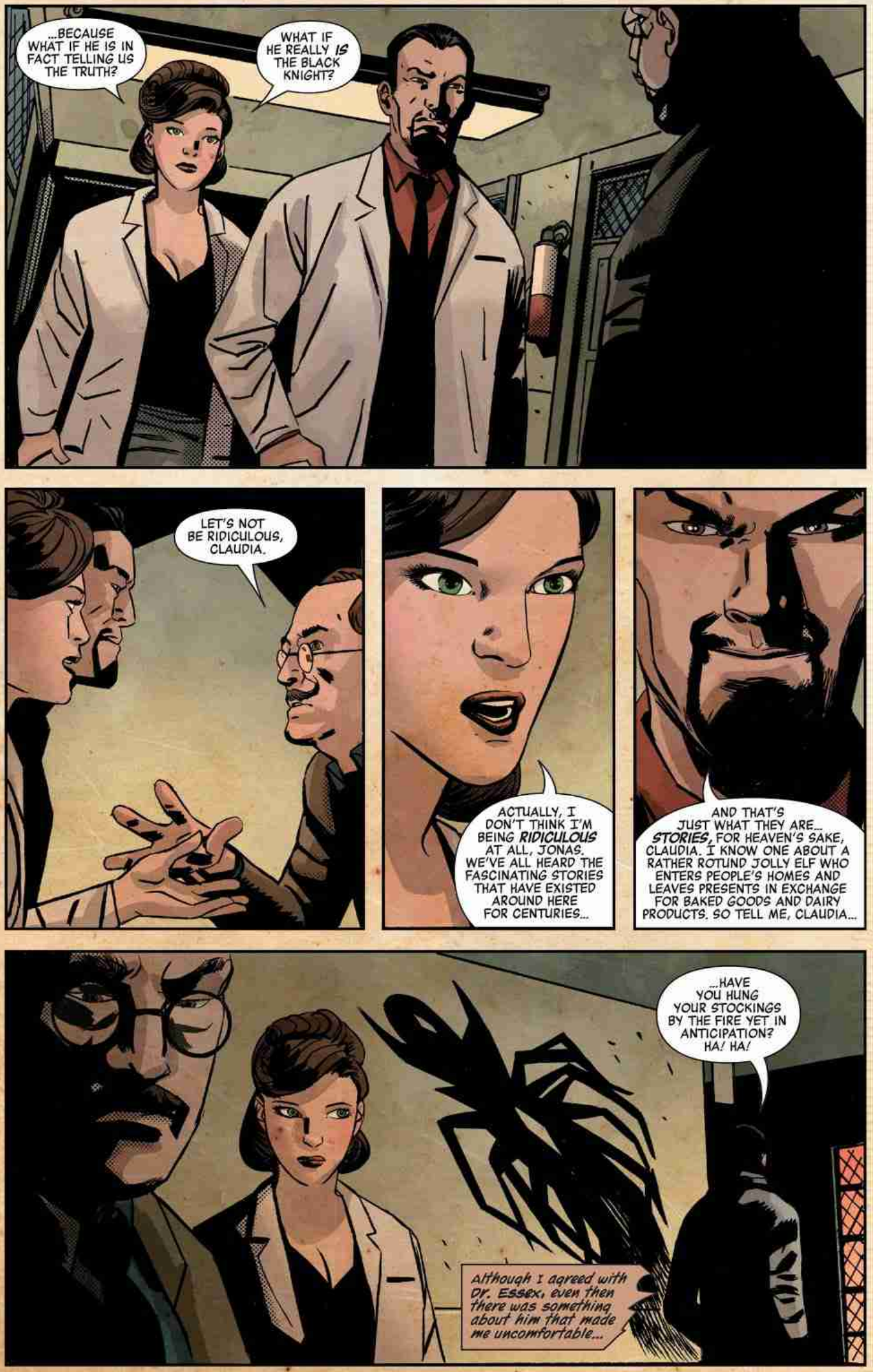
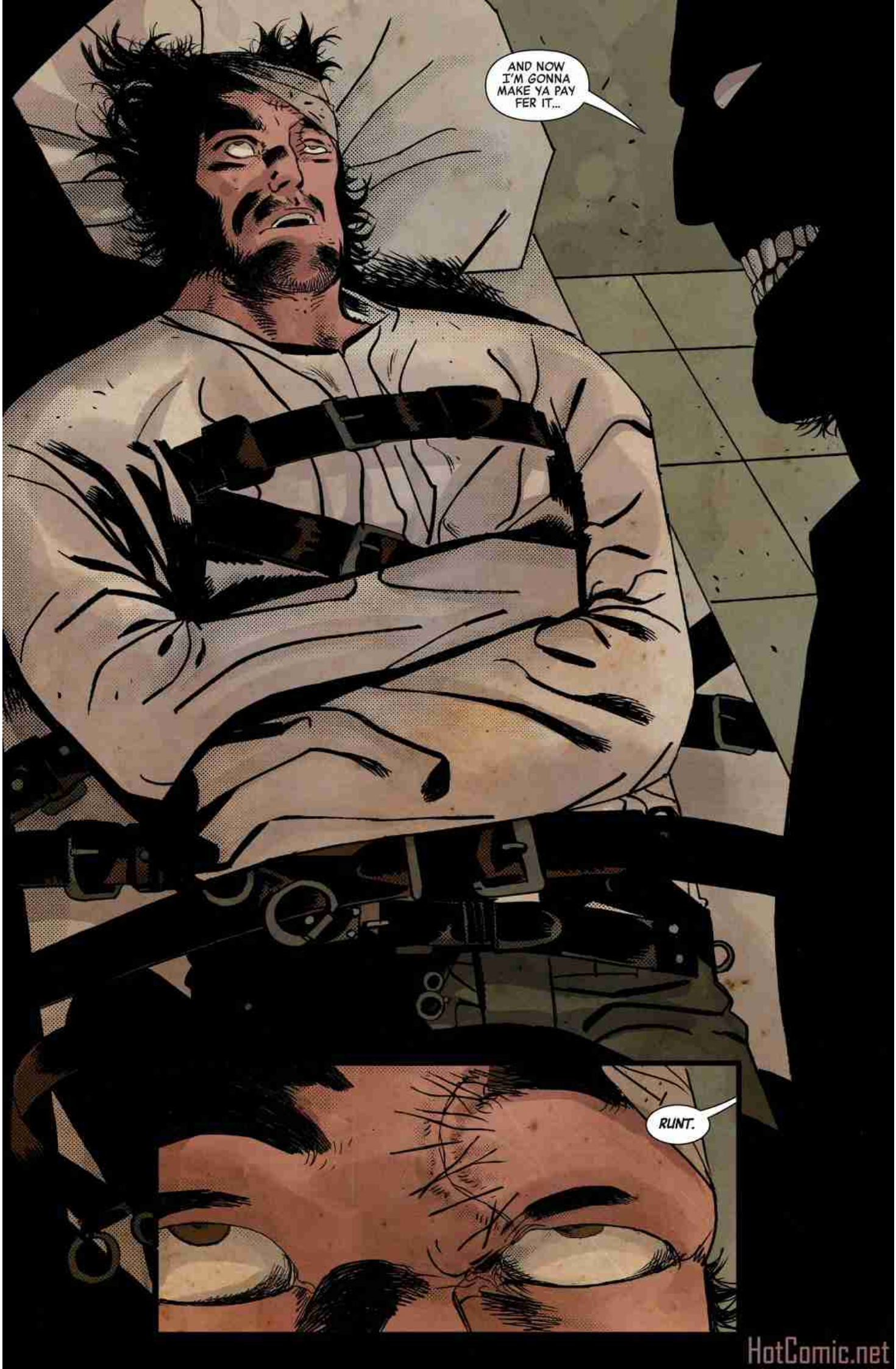

...BECAUSE WHAT IF HE IS IN FACT TELLING US THE TRUTH?
WHAT IF HE REALLY IS THE BLACK KNIGHT?
LET'S NOT BE RIDICULOUS, CLAUDIA.
ACTUALLY, I DON'T THINK I'M BEING RIDICULOUS AT ALL, JONAS. WE'VE ALL HEARD THE FASCINATING STORIES THAT HAVE EXISTED AROUND HERE FOR CENTURIES...
AND THAT'S JUST WHAT THEY ARE... STORIES, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, CLAUDIA. I KNOW ONE ABOUT A RATHER ROTUND JOLLY ELF WHO ENTERS PEOPLE'S HOMES AND LEAVES PRESENTS IN EXCHANGE FOR BAKED GOODS AND DAIRY PRODUCTS. SO TELL ME, CLAUDIA...
...HAVE YOU HUNG YOUR STOCKINGS BY THE FIRE YET IN ANTICIPATION? HA! HA!
Although I agreed with Dr. Essex, even then there was something about him that made me uncomfortable...

In time, I would learn how justifiable that discomfort was...
NICE TO FINALLY MEET YA. I'M VICTOR.
YA DON'T KNOW ME, BUT I'M THE REASON YER IN HERE RIGHT NOW.
WELL, TO BE PRECISE...
...THIS IS THE REASON YER IN HERE.
DAILY
KNICKERBOCKER KNIFER STRIKES AGAIN!
Third Victim In As Many Months. Does Our Fair City Have It's Own Jack The Ripper?
I FOUND YA THERE. IN THAT BEAUTIFUL MESS.
SCOOPED YA UP BEFORE THE COPPERS GOT THERE.
DON'T KNOW IF YA ACTUALLY DID IT. DON'T REALLY CARE.
I KNOW YA DONE IT BEFORE. WITH MY SISTER.
WITH MY BROTHER.



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THE SPECIMEN HAD BETTER REMAIN UNTOUCHED, VICTOR.
HEY, I AIN'T MESSED WITH HIM.
MUCH.
LONG HAVE I WAITED TO GET MY HANDS ON THIS PARTICULAR TEST SUBJECT. I'LL NOT SEE IT SPOILED DUE TO WHATEVER SILLY PERSONAL GRUDGE YOU MIGHT HAVE.
HEY, NO PROBLEM, DOC.
YOU JUST KEEP DOIN' YER THING.
CHZZZZ CHZZZZ
'CAUSE FROM THE LOOKS OF IT...

"...WHATEVER I HAD IN MIND COULDN'T POSSIBLY BE ANY WORSE THAN WITH HIM IN YER HANDS. HEH, HEH, HEH..."
KKRRRK
MR. LOGAN?
LOGAN?
YOU POOR THING. LOBOTOMIZED LIKE THIS.
THIS IS MY FAULT. I'VE LOOKED THE OTHER WAY ON DR. ESSEX'S QUESTIONABLE PRACTICES FOR FAR TOO LONG.
TONIGHT, IT ENDS.
I SWEAR THAT TONIGHT IS THE LAST NIGHT ANYONE GETS BRUTALIZED AT THIS INSTITUTION...

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YOU DON'T SCARE ME, VICTOR.
THAT'S OKAY. 'CAUSE SINCE WE CAN'T REALLY HAVE YA INTERFERIN' WITH WHAT THE DOC'S GOT GOIN' ON HERE...
...I'M ABOUT TO DO A HELL OF A LOT MORE THAN JUST SCARE YA.
RAHRRR!
SNIKT
ACK!

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YA RUNT... KAK!
STUPID LITTLE--KAK!--RUNT... I'M GONNA... KAK!
YOUR CLAWS...YOUR BRAIN APPARENTLY STARTING TO HEAL... IT'S ALL SO TRULY AMAZING. NOW I CAN SEE WHY ESSEX WAS SO INTERESTED IN YOU.
BUT NOW YOU HAVE TO LISTEN TO ME... CAN YOU UNDERSTAND ME, LOGAN? WHILE HE'S INJURED LIKE THIS...
...YOU NEED TO GO! DO YOU HEAR ME?
GO! NOW!
JUST SO YA KNOW, DR. RUSSELL...

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...HE AIN'T THE ONLY ONE WHO'S A FAST HEALER.
I WONDER IF YER GONNA BE ABLE TO SAY THE SAME.
YOU'D BE SURPRISED.
THE KNICKERBOCKER KNIFER MURDERS? THE ONES YOU TRIED TO PIN ON LOGAN... THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW. SOMETHING THE AUTHORITIES NEVER NOTICED.

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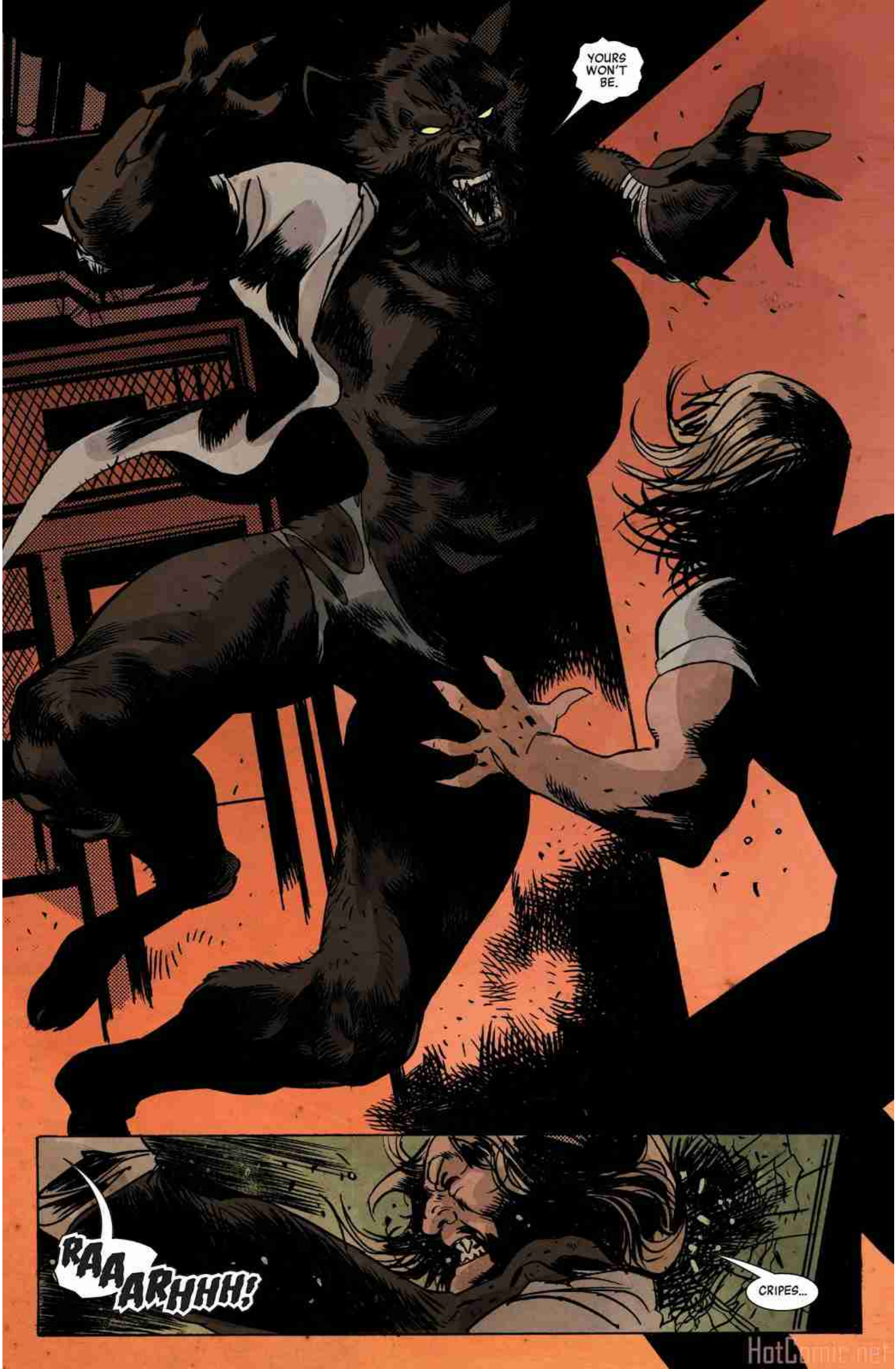

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YER A FRIGGIN'...
...WEREWOLF.
SHUK
LYCANTHROPE. WOLFWOMAN. WHATEVER YOU'D LIKE TO CALL HER, I'LL ADMIT...
...THIS WAS A BIT OF A SURPRISE.
AND ONE THING I HAVE PRIDED MYSELF IN AVOIDING IN MY LONG LIFE...IS SURPRISES. WE MUST DO BETTER, VICTOR.
I never saw Dr. Claudia Russell again after that day...
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BULLPEN BU

STAN'S SOAPBOX
FEBRUARY 1980

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Bear with me, gang. It's philosophy time again! I was having a discussion the other day with a professor pal of mine from U.C.L.A. about the so-called "generation gap," and I laid a few personal opinions on him that I'd like to share with you.

First, we're never gonna solve the generation gap till we stop seeking the wrong answers to the wrong questions. Every one yaps about young people being "different" nowadays. Forget it! Human nature doesn't change. It's the human condition that changes—it's the environment! What's happened to us is, the *world* has been wildly changing, producing new sets of rules each time you blink your eye. It's the social climate that's been changing, not you 'n me, Bunky!

Here, this'll show what I mean. Say you've got two homes, a large country estate and a small city apartment. You play your stereo full blast on your estate, but who cares? No one can hear it. You're not disturbing anyone. But play it just as loud in your small apartment with the paper thin walls and your neighbors wanna clobber you! You haven't changed. You're the same yoyo in both places. But the conditions are different!

The fact is, young people are the same as ever, the same noisy, scroungy, mangy, nutty, wonderful crazies they've always been — and adults are still the same grouchy, grunchy, goopy, hard-pressed and harassed heroes *they've* always been —and which you'll soon become! Nothing's changed but the labels. Which leads to point #2 —

None of us is all that different from each other. We all want essentially the same things outta life — a measure of security, some fun, some romance, friendship, and the respect of our contemporaries. That goes for Indians, Chinese, Russians, Jews, Arabs, Catholics, Protestants, blacks, browns, whites, and green-skinned Hulks. So why don't we all stop wasting time hating the "other" guys. Just look in the mirror, mister — that other guy is you!

Excelsior!

Stan

STAN LEE
FOREVER

HE STRIKES FROM OUTER SPACE--

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The next morning I received a note from her.
to Dr. Jonas
J.Ravencroft
It was her resignation...detailing her desire to practice abroad, back to her native Romania.
It was her handwriting. It was her wording. It was even something she had discussed doing on a number of occasions.
And yet something still seemed...
N.Essex
...off.
The origin of species
I couldn't quite put my finger on it.
Though I didn't know how, I didn't know what...

...I knew something bad had happened to her.
And I knew that somehow Dr. Nathaniel Essex was involved.
From that day forward, I never trusted him again. From that day forward...
...his free rein over my institute was over.

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IT CAN'T BE. NOT AFTER ALL THIS TIME...
I'VE GOT THIS, MR. MAYOR. AFTER ALL, WHAT BETTER WAY TO FIGHT A MONSTER...
...THAN WITH ANOTHER MONSTER?
HOPEFULLY YOU CAN CLONE YOURSELF, BECAUSE THESE VAMPSTROSITIES JUST KEEP COMING AND ONE MAN-WOLF AIN'T ENOUGH!
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INDEED. THERE APPEARS TO BE NO END TO THEM, UNFORTUNATELY.
OR TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY...
...WE'VE GOTTA GET THE @#$% OUTTA HERE BEFORE THERE'S AN END TO US!
COME ON, DAMN YOU ALL...
UNWANTED

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I KNOW YOU AGREE WITH ME, FISK. I SAW YOUR FACE.
YOU LOOK LIKE YOU SAW A GHOST IN THERE. OR MAYBE...
...THE GHOST SAW YOU.
IF YOU AIM TO MAKE AN ACCUSATION, MISS KNIGHT, I SUGGEST YOU DO SO.
OTHERWISE, I WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO CHOOSE YOUR WORDS MORE CAREFULLY. AFTER ALL, THE MAYOR WOULD BE A POWERFUL ENEMY.
To Be Continued!

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NEXT

RUINS OF RAVENCROFT: DRACULA

ON SALE JANUARY 2020

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